



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

In another paper this doctrine of the coexistence of the Finite and the Infinite will be considered in its application to various concrete problems.

MEDITATIONS

CONCERNING THE FIRST PHILOSOPHY,

In which are clearly proved the Existence of God, and the real distinction between the Soul and Body of Man.

Translated from the French of Descartes, by WM. R. WALKER.

FOURTH MEDITATION.

ON THE TRUE AND THE FALSE.

I have during these past days so accustomed myself to detach my mind from the senses, and have so accurately observed that there are very few things of a corporeal kind which we can know with certainty, that there are many more things known to us relating to the human mind, and yet more relating to God himself, that it will now be easy for me to turn my mind away from the consideration of things sensible and imaginable, and fix it on those which, being disengaged from everything material, are purely intelligible. And, indeed, the idea that I have of the human mind, in so far as it is a thing that thinks, and not extended in length, breadth and depth, and that does not participate in anything belonging to the body, is incomparably more distinct than the idea of anything corporeal; and when I consider that I doubt—that is to say, that I am a thing incomplete and dependent—the idea of a being complete and independent—that is to say, of God—is presented to my mind with much distinctness and clearness; and from the single fact that this idea is in me, or rather that I, who possess this idea, am or exist, the existence of God and that my existence depends entirely on him throughout every moment of my life, are conclusions so evident that I cannot think it possible for the human mind to know anything with more evidence and certainty. And already I seem to discover a way leading from this contempla-

tion of the true God, in whom are contained all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom, to the knowledge of the other things in the universe.

For, in the first place, I perceive it to be impossible that he should ever deceive me, since all fraud and deception imply some kind of imperfection: and although it seems that the ability to deceive is a mark of subtilty or power, yet the will to deceive testifies, without doubt, of weakness or malice; and therefore that cannot be in God. Further, I know by my own experience that there is in me a certain faculty of judgment, or discernment of the true from the false, which without doubt I have received from God, as well as all the other things that are in me and that I possess; and since it is impossible that he should wish to deceive me, it is also certain that he has not given it to me so that I could ever err in using it as it should be used.

And there would remain no doubt concerning this, if one could not apparently draw from it this conclusion, that in this way I can never be deceived; for, if all that is in me comes from God, and if he has not put within me any faculty for erring, it seems that I ought never to be mistaken. It is equally true that, when I consider myself only as coming from God, and when I am turned altogether towards him, I do not discover in me any cause of error or falsity; but immediately after, returning to myself, experience teaches me that I am nevertheless subject to an infinity of errors, on investigating the cause of which I observe that there is not only presented to my mind a real and positive idea of God, or rather of a being sovereignly perfect, but also, so to speak, a certain negative idea of nothingness—that is to say, of that which is infinitely removed from every kind of perfection—and that I am as a mean between God and nothingness—that is, placed in such a fashion between the sovereign being and non-being, that there is not in truth anything in me which can lead me into error in so far as a sovereign Being has produced me; but that if I regard myself as participating in some way in nothingness or non-being—that is to say, in so far as I myself am not the sovereign Being and have many things wanting in me—I am exposed to an infinity of wants, so that I ought not to be astonished if I am deceived. And

thus I know that error, as such, is not a thing of reality depending on God, but only a defect; and consequently, in order to err, I need no faculty to be given me by God especially for this purpose; but the reason that I am deceived is that the power which God has given me to discern between the true and the false is not infinite within me.

Nevertheless, this does not yet altogether satisfy me; for error is not a pure negation—that is to say, is not the simple defect or want of some perfection which does not belong to me—but is a privation of some knowledge which it appears that I should have. Now, in considering the nature of God, it does not seem possible that he has put in me any faculty which is not perfect of its kind, that is, wanting in any perfection belonging to it: for, if it is true that the more expert the artisan is, the more perfect and complete are the productions of his hands, what thing could have been produced by this sovereign Creator of the universe not perfect and entirely complete in all its parts? And there is not a doubt but that God could have created me so that I should never be deceived; it is also certain that he always wills what is best: is it, then, better that I should be liable to deception than that deception should be a thing impossible to be wrought upon me?

Looking at this attentively, it at once occurs to me that I ought not to be astonished if I am not capable of comprehending wherefore God acts as he does, and that I need not on that account doubt his existence, since perhaps I see by experience many other things which exist without my being able to comprehend the reason of their existence, or how God has made them; for, already knowing that my nature is extremely weak and limited, and that the nature of God is, on the contrary, unlimited, incomprehensible, and infinite, I have no longer any difficulty in recognizing that there are an infinity of things in his power whose causes are beyond my comprehension; and that reason is alone sufficient to persuade me that all that kind of causes which we are accustomed to derive from the end is useless in things physical or natural; for it does not seem to me that I can without temerity investigate and attempt to discover the impenetrable ends of God.

Moreover, it further occurs to me that we ought not to consider a single creature separately, when we investigate

whether the works of God are perfect, but generally all creatures together; for the same thing which might perhaps with some show of reason seem very imperfect if it were alone in the world, might come to be very perfect when considered as forming part of this whole universe; and although, since I formed the design of doubting all things, I have as yet known with certainty only my own existence and that of God; yet since I have recognized the infinite power of God, I cannot deny that he has produced many other things, or at least that he can produce them, so that I exist and am placed in the world as making part of the universality of all beings.

Next, coming to look at myself more closely and to consider what are my errors, which of themselves testify that imperfection is in me, I find that they depend upon the concurrence of two causes, namely, the faculty of knowing, which is in me, and the faculty of election, or rather of my free judgment—that is, of my understanding and, together, of my will. For by the understanding alone I neither affirm nor deny anything, but conceive only the ideas of the things which I can affirm or deny. Now, in considering it thus precisely, it may be said that there is never any error in it, provided the word error is taken in its proper signification. And although there may perhaps be an infinitude of things in the world of which I have no idea in my understanding, it cannot be said that it is therefore deprived of those ideas as of something that is of necessity part of its nature, but only that it has them not, because there is in reality no reason which could prove that God ought to have given me a greater and more ample faculty of knowing than that which he has given me; and however skilful and wise a worker I may imagine him to be, I am not therefore to think that he ought to have put into each of his works all the perfections that he may have put into some. Nor can I complain that God has not given me a free will, or a will sufficiently ample and sufficiently perfect, since in reality I experience it to be so ample and extended as not to be shut up within any limits. And what here appears to me to be very remarkable is, that of all the other things that are in me, there are none so perfect and so great but that I could acknowledge that they might be still greater and more perfect. For, to take an example, if I consider the faculty of

conception within me, I find it to be of very small stretch and greatly limited, and at the same time I represent to myself the idea of another faculty much larger and even infinite; and from the single fact that I can represent to myself its idea, I know without difficulty that it belongs to the nature of God. In the same way, if I examine the memory or the imagination, or any other faculty in me, I do not find any which are not very small and limited, and which in God are not immense and infinite. It is only the volition, only the liberty of free will, which I experience in me to be so great as that I can conceive no idea of any other more ample and extended: so that it is chiefly this which makes known to me that I bear the image and resemblance of God. For, although it be incomparably greater in God than in me, whether by reason of the knowledge and power that are joined with it and render it firmer and more efficacious, or by reason of the object, inasmuch as it moves and stretches towards innumerable more things, yet it does not seem to me greater when considered formally and precisely in itself. For it consists only in this, that we can do or not do a certain thing, that is to say, affirm or deny, pursue or shun, a certain thing; or rather it consists only in this, that in order to affirm or deny, pursue or shun, the things which the understanding proposes, we should act so that we do not feel any external force constraining us. For, in order that I may be free, it is not necessary for me to be indifferent in choosing one or the other of two contraries; but rather, the more I lean towards one, whether because I know certainly that the good and the true are there, or because God so disposes my inward thought, so much the more freely do I make my choice and embrace it; and, indeed, divine grace and natural knowledge, so far from diminishing my liberty, rather increase and strengthen it, so that this indifference which I feel when not borne by the weight of any reason to one side more than to another, is the lowest degree of liberty, and shows rather a defect of knowledge than a perfection of will: for if I knew always clearly what is true and what is good, I should never have difficulty in determining what judgment and what choice I ought to make, and thus I should be entirely free without ever being indifferent.

From all this, I find that it is neither the power of the will, which I have received from God, that is the cause of my errors, for it is very ample and very perfect of its kind, nor is it the power of the understanding or of the conception; for, not conceiving anything but by means of this power of conception which God has given me, there cannot be a doubt but that what I do conceive, I conceive aright, and it is impossible for me to be deceived in that.

Whence, then, spring my errors? From this alone, that the will being much more ample and more extended than the understanding, I cannot hold it within the same limits, but stretch it to the things which I do not understand; among which things, being of itself indifferent, it goes very easily astray, and chooses the false instead of the true and the evil instead of the good, and hence it is that I am deceived and that I sin.

For example, when I was lately examining whether anything really existed in the world, and concluded, from the single fact that I did examine this question, that it very evidently followed that I myself existed, I could not hinder myself from judging that a thing which I conceived so clearly was true; not that I found myself forced to such a judgment by any external cause, but only because from a great clearness there was in my understanding there followed a great inclination of my will; and, I am inclined to believe, there was all the more liberty that it was with less indifference. On the contrary, I at present know only that I exist in so far as I am something that thinks, but there is also presented to my mind a certain idea of corporeal nature; which leads me to doubt whether this nature which thinks, which is in me, or rather which I myself am, is different from this corporeal nature, or whether both are not one and the same thing; and I suppose here that I do not yet know any reason to persuade me of the one rather than the other; whence it follows that I am entirely indifferent as to denying or affirming it, or even abstaining from giving any judgment in the matter.

And this indifference extends not only to the things of which the understanding has no knowledge, but generally also to all those which it fails to discover with perfect clearness at the moment that the will is in deliberation; for how-

ever probable may be the conjectures which incline me in judging anything, the simple knowledge that these are but conjectures and not certain and indubitable reasons is sufficient to give me occasion to judge the contrary; a course which I have had abundant experience of during these past days when I set down as false all that formerly I had held as very true, for the sole reason that I observed they could in some fashion be called in question. Now, if I withhold my judgment upon a thing when my conception of it is not sufficiently clear and distinct, it is evident that I do well and am not deceived; but if I resolve to deny or affirm it, then I do not employ my free will as I ought; and if I affirm what is not true, it is evident that I am deceived, and even although I judge according to the truth, it will be but the result of chance, and I do none the less err and make a wrong use of my free will; for the natural light teaches us that the knowledge of the understanding ought always to precede the determination of the will.

And it is in this wrong use of the free will that lies the privation which constitutes the form of error. The privation, I say, is found in operation in so far as it proceeds from me; but it is not found in the faculty which I have received from God, nor even in its operation in so far as it depends on him; for I have certainly no cause of complaint that God has not given me a more ample intelligence or a natural light more perfect than he has given me, since it is of the nature of a finite understanding not to understand many things, and of the nature of a created understanding to be finite; but I have every reason to render thanks to him in that, while never having owed me anything, he has nevertheless given me what few perfections are in me, and I am far from conceiving sentiments so unjust as to imagine that he has unjustly withheld or deprived me of the other perfections which he has not given me.

Nor have I cause to complain that he has not given me a will more ample than my understanding, because since the will consists but of one object and is thus indivisible, it seems that its nature is such that nothing could be taken from it without destroying it; and, certainly, the greater its extent the more reason have I to acknowledge the goodness of him who gave it me.

And, finally, I have no cause to complain that God concurs with me in producing the acts of this will, that is to say, the judgments in which I am deceived ; because those acts are entirely true and absolutely good in so far as they depend on God ; and there is in a measure more perfection in my nature from my being able to produce them than if I could not produce them. For privation, in which alone consists the formal reason of error and sin, needs no concurrence of God, because it is not a thing or a being, and because if we refer it to God as its cause, it ought not to be called privation, but only negation, according to the signification given to those words in scholastic philosophy. For, in truth, it is not an imperfection in God that he has bestowed upon me the liberty of giving or not giving my judgment on certain things of which he has not put a clear and distinct knowledge in my understanding ; but it is doubtless an imperfection in me that I do not use this liberty aright, and that I rashly give judgment on things which I conceive but with obscurity and confusion.

I nevertheless see that it were easy for God to bring it about that I should never be deceived although remaining free and with a limited knowledge, namely, if he should give to my understanding a clear and distinct intelligence of everything on which I should ever deliberate, or even only if he should engrave on my memory so deeply that I could never forget it, the resolution of never judging anything without a clear and distinct conception of it. And I may remark that in so far as I consider myself altogether alone, as if there were only myself in the world, I should have been much more perfect than I am if God had so created me that I should never err ; but I cannot therefore deny that there is not in some fashion a greater perfection in the universe from some of its parts not being exempt from defect, as others are, than if they all were were alike.

And I have no right to complain that God, having placed me in the world, did not will that I should be ranked among the noblest and most perfect things ; I have even cause for contentment that if he has not given me the perfection of being free from error by the first method I have just spoken of, which depends on a clear and evident knowledge of all the things on which I can deliberate, he has at least left in my

power the other method, which is to hold firm the resolution of never giving judgment on things the truth of which is not clearly known to me: for though I realize my weakness in not being able to fix my mind continually on one thought, I can yet, by a vigilant and oft-reiterated meditation, imprint it so strongly on my memory that I shall never want reminding whenever I shall have need of it, and in this way I may acquire the habit of evading error; and inasmuch as in this consists the greatest and the principal perfection of man, I consider that to-day I have gained not a little by this meditation in having discovered the cause of error and falsity.

And, indeed, there can be no other cause than that which I have just declared: for as often as I so keep my will within the limits of my knowledge that it pronounces no judgment but on things which are clearly and distinctly represented to it by the understanding, it cannot come to pass that I should be deceived; because every clear and distinct conception is, without doubt, something, and therefore it cannot derive its origin from nothing, but has necessarily God for its author: God, I say, who being sovereignly perfect cannot be the cause of any error; and consequently the necessary conclusion is that such a conception or such a judgment is true. Furthermore, I have not only learned to-day what I ought to shun in order to be no more deceived, but also what course I ought to follow in order to arrive at the knowledge of truth. For I shall certainly arrive thither if I fix my attention sufficiently upon all the things that I conceive perfectly, and separate them from others which I have conceived only with confusion and obscurity: and of this I shall hereafter keep careful watch.

FIFTH MEDITATION.

ON THE ESSENCE OF THINGS MATERIAL, AND AGAIN, OF GOD AND HIS EXISTENCE.

There remain many other things for me to examine concerning the attributes of God, and concerning my own nature, that is to say, the nature of my mind; and of these I shall perhaps at another time make an investigation. For the present, after having observed what must be done or avoided in order to arrive at the knowledge of the truth, what I have

chiefly to do is to attempt to go forth and rid myself of all the doubts into which I have fallen during these past days, and to see if something certain cannot be known concerning things material. But, before examining whether there are such things existing outside of me, I ought to consider their ideas so far as they are in my mind, and see what of them are distinct and what are confused.

In the first place, I distinctly imagine that quantity which philosophers commonly call continuous quantity, or properly the extension in length, breadth and depth which is in this quantity, or rather in the thing to which it is attributed. Moreover, I can discern in it many diverse parts, and attribute to each of those parts all kinds of sizes, shapes, positions, and movements; and, in fine, I can assign to each of those movements all kinds of duration. And I not only know those things with distinctness when I thus consider them in general, but also, however slightly I may fix my attention on them, I recognize an infinitude of particulars concerning the numbers, shapes, movements, and other similar things, whose truth becomes apparent with so much evidence and agrees so well with my nature, that when I begin to discover them it does not seem as if I learn anything new, but rather that I call to mind what I had heretofore already known; in other words, I perceive things which are already in my mind, although I might not have again turned my thoughts towards them. And what I find here of most moment is that there is in me an infinitude of ideas of certain things which cannot be considered as pure nothingness, although perhaps they have no existence outside of my mind, and which are not feigned by me, though I may be free to think them or not think them, but which have their true and immutable natures. As, for example, when I imagine a triangle, although there is perhaps no such figure in the world outside of my mind and may never have been; there is however none the less a certain nature, or form, or determinate essence of this figure, which is immutable and eternal, which I have not invented, and which in no way depends on my mind,—as is apparent from the fact that we can demonstrate various properties of this triangle, namely, that its three angles are equal to two right angles, that the greatest angle is subtended by the greatest side, and so forth,

which now, whether I will or not, I recognize very clearly and very evidently to be in it, although I may not have before thought of them in any way when I first imagined to myself a triangle; and, therefore, it cannot be said that I either feigned or invented them. And it cannot be here objected that perhaps this idea of the triangle came into my mind by the intervention of my senses from my having sometimes seen bodies of a triangular shape; for I can form in my mind an infinitude of other figures of which there could not be the smallest suspicion that they had ever fallen under the observation of my senses, and yet I can none the less demonstrate various properties concerning their nature as well as that of the triangle; which, certainly, ought to be all true, because I conceive them clearly: and, therefore, they are something and not pure nothingness; for it is very evident that all that is true is something, truth being the same thing as being; and I have already amply above demonstrated that all the things which I know clearly and distinctly are true. And, although I had not demonstrated it, yet the nature of my mind is such that I could not but esteem them as true so long as I conceive them clearly and distinctly; and I remember that, even when I was still strongly attached to the objects of sense, I counted as among the number of the most constant truths which I conceived clearly and distinctly concerning figures, the numbers and other things belonging to arithmetic and geometry.

But now, if, from the single fact that I can draw from my mind the idea of something, it follows that all that I recognize clearly and distinctly as belonging to that thing in reality belongs to it, can I not draw from this an argument and a proof demonstrative of the existence of God? It is certain that the idea of him is not less in me—that is, the idea of a being sovereignly perfect—than that of any figure or number whatever it may be; and I do not know less clearly and distinctly that an actual and eternal existence belongs to his nature, than that I know that all which I can demonstrate of any figure or number really belongs to the nature of that figure or number; and therefore, although all that I concluded in the preceding *Meditations* should not be true, the existence of God ought to be received into my mind with at least as

much certainty as I have until now regarded all the mathematical truths which relate only to numbers and figures, although in truth that may not at first appear entirely manifest, but seem to have some appearance of sophistry. For, being accustomed in all other things to make a distinction between existence and essence, I easily persuade myself that the existence can be separated from the essence of God, and that thus God might be conceived as not actually existing. But nevertheless, when I regard the matter with more attention, I find it manifest that existence can no more be separated from the essence of God than can the essence of a rectilinear triangle be separated from the fact that its three angles are equal to two right angles, or than the idea of a mountain can be separated from the idea of a valley; so that there is no less repugnance in conceiving a God—that is, a Being sovereignly perfect—to whom existence is wanting—that is, to whom some perfection is wanting—than in conceiving a mountain which has no valley.

But although in truth I cannot conceive a God without existence any more than I can conceive a mountain without a valley, yet, as from the single fact that I conceive a mountain with a valley, it does not follow that there is any mountain in the world; so also, although I may conceive God as existing, it does not follow, it seems to me, that God exists: for my thought does not impose any necessity on things; and as there is no difficulty in my imagining a horse with wings although there may be none having wings, so I could perhaps attribute existence to God although no God did exist. Far from it; there is here a sophism hid under the plausibility of this objection: for from the fact that I cannot conceive a mountain without a valley, it does not follow that there is in the world either mountain or valley, but only that the mountain and the valley, whether they are or are not, are inseparably joined to each other; while from this fact alone, that I cannot conceive God but as existing, it follows that existence is inseparable from him, and, therefore, that he truly exists. Not that my thought can effect this, or that it imposes on things any necessity; but, on the contrary, the necessity which is in the thing itself—that is to say, the necessity of the existence of God—determines me to have this

thought: for it is not in my power to conceive a God without existence—that is to say, a Being sovereignly perfect without a sovereign perfection, though it is in my power to imagine a horse without wings or with them.

Nor ought it to be said here that though it is in truth necessary for me to admit that God exists, since I have supposed him to possess all kinds of perfection, and existence is one of them, yet that my first supposition was no more necessary than it is necessary to think that all four-sided figures can be inscribed in a circle, a supposition that if entertained by me would force me to admit that the rhombus can be there inscribed because it is a four-sided figure, and thus I would be obliged to admit a thing that is false. One ought not, I say, to allege that: for although it may not be necessary for me ever to fall a-thinking of God, yet, as often as it does happen that I think of a Being first and sovereign, and to draw, so to speak, his idea from the treasure of my mind, I must attribute to him every kind of perfection, although I may not proceed to number them all, or fix my attention upon each of them in particular. And this necessity suffices to lead me (as soon as I recognize that existence is a perfection) to conclude very strongly that that first and sovereign Being exists, and similarly, though it is not necessary that I should ever imagine any triangle, yet as often as I wish to consider a rectilineal figure composed only of three angles, it is absolutely necessary that I attribute to it everything which goes to prove that those three angles are not greater than two right angles, although perhaps I do not then consider that in particular. But when I examine what figures are capable of being inscribed within a circle, it is in nowise necessary to think that all four-sided figures are of this number; on the contrary, I cannot even feign that to be so as long as I do not wish to receive anything into my thought save what I can clearly and distinctly conceive. And consequently there is here a great difference between false suppositions such as that and the true ideas which were born with me, of which the first and principal is that of God. For in truth I recognize in many ways that this idea is not something feigned or invented, depending only on my thought, but that it is the image of a true and immutable nature: first, because I could not conceive any-

thing but God, to whose essence existence of necessity belongs, and because it is impossible for me to conceive two or more Gods such as he; and admitting that there is one now existing, I see clearly that he must have before this existed from all eternity, and that he will hereafter exist to all eternity; and, finally, because I conceive many other things in God incapable of diminution or change.

Besides, of whatever proof and argument I may avail myself, it is always necessary to return to this: that it is only the things which I conceive clearly and distinctly which have the effect of persuading me entirely. And although among the things which I conceive of this sort there are in truth some which are manifestly known to every one, while there are others which are revealed only to those who consider them more closely and examine them with more exactness, yet, after these are once discovered, they are not esteemed less certain than the others. As, for example, in a right-angled triangle, although it is not at first so apparent that the square of the base is equal to the squares of the two other sides, as it is that the base is opposite to the greatest angle, nevertheless when once recognized we are as much persuaded of the truth of the one as of the other. And as regards God, truly, if my mind were not prepossessed by any prejudices and my thought not diverted by the continual presence of the images of sensible things, there is nothing which I could know more readily or more easily than he. For is there anything of itself clearer or more manifest than the thought that there is a God—that is to say, a Being sovereign and perfect—in the idea of whom alone is necessary or eternal existence included, and who consequently exists? And although, in order rightly to conceive this truth, I have had need of great application of mind, yet at present I am not only as much assured of this as of any of the things which appear to me most certain, but I observe, besides, that the certainty of all the other things depends so absolutely on this, that without this knowledge it is impossible ever to know anything perfectly.

For, although I am of such a nature that as soon as I comprehend anything very clearly and distinctly, I cannot but believe it to be true, yet, because I am also of such a nature as to be unable to keep my mind continually fixed upon one

thing, and because I often call to mind my having judged a thing to be true when I had ceased to consider the reasons which led me so to judge it, it may happen during such time that other reasons are presented to me, which would readily change my opinion if I were ignorant that there is a God; and thus I would never have a true and certain knowledge of anything whatever, but only vague and inconstant opinions. As, for example, when I consider the nature of a rectilineal triangle, I know evidently, being a little versed in geometry, that its three angles are equal to two right angles, and this it is impossible for me to disbelieve while I apply my mind to its demonstration; but as soon as I turn away from it, although I remember that I clearly comprehended it, yet I can readily enough doubt of its truth if I do not know there is a God: for I may persuade myself that I was so constituted by nature as to be easily deceived, even in the things which I believe myself to comprehend with the greatest evidence and certainty; especially considering that I remember having often deemed many things to be true and certain, which afterwards other reasons have led me to judge to be absolutely false.

But, after having recognized that there is a God, whereby at the same time I recognized also that all things depend on him and that he is no deceiver, and that consequently I judged that all that I conceive clearly and distinctly cannot fail to be true: although I do not any more think of the reasons which led me to judge that to be true, yet provided only that I remember to have clearly and distinctly comprehended it, there can be no contrary reason produced which would ever bring me to call it in question; and thus I have a true and certain knowledge of it. And this same knowledge extends also to all the other things which I remember having formerly demonstrated as to the truths of geometry and other similar things; for what objection can be brought which would make me call them in question? Will it be that my nature is such that I am greatly subject to error? But I already know that I cannot be deceived in the judgments whose reasons are clearly known to me. Will it be that I have formerly deemed many things to be true and certain which I have since recognized to be false? But I did not clearly or

distinctly know any of those things; and, not then knowing this rule by which I assure myself of the truth, I was led to believe them by reasons which I have since recognized to be less strong than I then imagined them to be. What further objection, then, can be made? Will it be that perhaps I am asleep (an objection which I myself formerly made), or that all the thoughts which I now have are no more true than the reveries which we imagine in our sleep? But even when I am asleep, all that is presented to my mind with evidence is absolutely true.

And thus I recognize very clearly that the certainty and the truth of all science depends solely on the knowledge of the true God: so that before knowing him I could not perfectly know any other thing. And now that I know him, I have the means of acquiring a perfect knowledge concerning an infinitude of things, not only of those which are in him, but also of those which belong to corporeal nature in so far as it can serve as the object of mathematical demonstrations which do not take into consideration his existence.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PLATO.

Translated from the German of G. W. F. HEGEL.

[The following translation includes the whole of the extended notice given to Plato in the second volume of Hegel's History of Philosophy. About two fifths is devoted to the general features of Plato's Philosophy, after which follow special considerations of (1) The Dialectic, (2) Philosophy of Nature, (3) Philosophy of Spirit. The three special treatises are reserved for the next number of this Journal. The Philosophy of Aristotle, treated by the same masterly hand, will form a fitting continuation to this undertaking. In the philosophy of Plato, and especially in that of Aristotle, Hegel finds all speculative philosophy—either in germ or considerably expanded; and he who reads for the first time these notices will be continually surprised by the marvellous accuracy with which those great Greeks have expressed insights that are usually accredited to modern thought. Nothing lends so much to that philosophic calm, which accompanies a feeling of repose in the Truth, as the re-discovery of one's thought in the systems of the ancient masters. "Surely it is no subjective illusion of mine—this speculative thought—for it has been tried in the fire of History for two thousand years, and still remains as the frame-work of all science and all forms of practical life. Dante, who calls Aristotle "the master of those who know" (*Vidi 'l Maestro di color che sanno*), was well acquainted with this secure feeling which a knowledge of Truth gives, and thus gives utterance to it in the fourth canto of the Paradise (a passage Hegel loved to quote):